

# News Release

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## Wisconsin graduation rate among tops in the nation

*Gaps persist for too many*

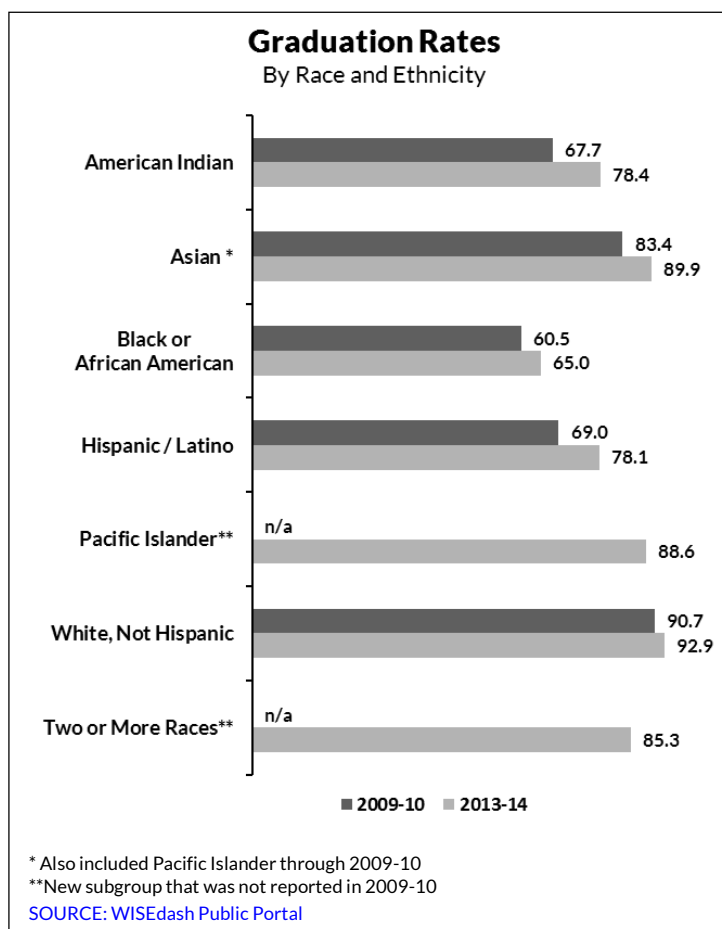
MADISON — Preliminary data from the U.S. Department of Education shows Wisconsin’s 2014 public school graduation rate (88.6 percent) is among the highest in the nation.

Wisconsin ranked third nationwide; tied with New Jersey. Iowa was first with a graduation rate of 90.5 percent, followed by Nebraska at 89.7 percent. The preliminary data also show that 36 states, including Wisconsin, saw increases in their overall four-year graduation rates, while six states had declines and another eight states had no change since 2012-13. Wisconsin’s 2014 graduation rate was six-tenths of a point higher than the prior year.

“Our 2014 graduates and their teachers deserve our celebration and praise,” said State Superintendent Tony Evers. “It is their hard work, along with support from parents, school staff, and the community, that make educational success, and especially high school graduation, the goal for every student.”

While the state’s graduation rate for all students ranks near the top of the nation, gaps persist among racial subgroups. According to the

preliminary data from the [National Center for Education Statistics](#) (NCES), Wisconsin has the biggest gap between



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white and black students nationally. Rates have increased for all racial and ethnic groups between 2013-14 and 2009-10.

“Last year, I presented the recommendations of my Promoting Excellence for All Task Force, comprised of educators who have demonstrated success closing achievement gaps in their local communities,” Evers said. “This fall, we added more strategies that educators and families can use to help close gaps thanks to the work of my Parent Advisory Council. Closing achievement gaps remain my top focus, but it is a trend that cannot be reversed overnight. The work we do on important social issues like this are a labor of love that require family and community involvement supported by targeted investments in what works. But the bottom line is that as the diversity of our student population continues to grow, we can no longer afford to see gaps between our white and non-white students.”

The NCES is expected to release final graduation rate data for the class of 2014 — including the nation’s newest graduation rate — in the coming months. The nation’s 2013 graduation rate was 81 percent, the highest rate ever.

Since 2010, NCES has required all states to use an adjusted cohort graduation rate. Under the federal graduation rate definition, each student is assigned to a cohort when entering high school, the 2010-11 school year for the class of 2014. The cohort is adjusted for students who transfer to another state or nonpublic school, emigrate from the United States to another country, or die during the timeframe. The graduation rate is based on students who earn a regular high school diploma in four years.

Wisconsin’s adjusted cohort graduation rate for the class of 2014 was the highest it’s been since using that method for computing the four-year graduation rate. The state also calculates five-year and six-year graduation rates to account for students who, by state and federal law, have additional time to complete their high school education. For the 2013-14 school year, the five-year graduation rate was 91.3 percent and the six-year rate, 91.5 percent.

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